CENTRIFUGE
POMPLAMOOSE

STOP

YOU KNOW, IT'S USUALLY NOT MY BUSINESS TO TALK PEOPLE OUT OF DRINKING, BUT I'VE SEEN YOU HERE ALMOST EVERY DAY FOR THE LAST TWO WEEKS.
YEAH, IT'S BEEN A BIT OF A ROUGH TIME FOR ME. A DRINK HERE OR THERE HELPS.
I'M GOING TO TAKE A WILD GUESS AND SAY THAT IT'S BECAUSE OF A WOMAN? A MAN? YOU CAN NEVER TELL THESE DAYS. EITHER WAY, I'M POSITIVE YOU ARE MEDICATING BECAUSE OF RELATIONSHIP PROBLEMS.
AM I RIGHT?

YEAH, WELL, BECAUSE I USED TO HAVE RELATIONSHIP PROBLEMS.
I DON'T ANYMORE, AND THAT IS THE PROBLEM. IF THAT MAKES SENSE.
A BREAK-UP. I SEE.
DID SHE DUMP YOU FOR SOMEONE ELSE?
CAUGHT HIM CHEATING?
ARE YOU AT LEAST GOING TO TELL ME IF IT WAS A GUY OR A GAL?
IT WAS A GIRL. SHE WAS MY HIGH-SCHOOL SWEETHEART. AND HAD BEEN MY GIRLFRIEND FOR THE BETTER PART OF A DECADE NOW.
AHH, I SEE. SOUNDS ROUGH.
ACTUALLY, IT WAS A VERY SMOOTH BREAK. WE JUST DON'T TALK ANYMORE. I JUST CAN'T SEEM TO GET HER OUT OF MY HEAD.
IT ALWAYS HAPPENS LIKE THAT.

WELL, I'LL TELL YOU THIS: THE ALCOHOL WILL PROBABLY JUST MAKE IT WORSE. YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW MANY PEOPLE END UP CALLING OR VISITING, OR CONTACTING THEIR EXES DUE TO ALCOHOL.
THE RESULT IS NEVER PRETTY.
I USUALLY LET THEM DO IT BECAUSE IT'S FUNNY. BUT IN YOUR CASE, I HAVE A FEELING THAT IT WILL JUST CAUSE THINGS TO GO REALLY SOUR.
UNLESS YOU CAN TELL ME THAT YOU REALLY WANT HER BACK AND THAT SHE FEELS THE SAME WAY.
I DON'T THINK I WANT HER BACK.
WELL, IN MY PERSONAL OPINION, I WOULD SUGGEST BURNING THE BRIDGE. IN MOST CASES, STAYING FRIENDS JUST CAUSES MORE WOUNDS.
I DON'T KNOW. I REALLY MISS HER.
AT LEAST I THINK I MISS HER. I JUST FEEL ALONE.
EVEN IF SHE WAS SEVERAL STATES AWAY, I ALWAYS FELT COMFORTABLE KNOWING SHE WAS THERE.

GOD! IT FEELS LIKE I'VE WASTED SO MUCH TIME. I AM SINGLE AGAIN! THIS SUCKS!
I DON'T MEAN TO BE RUDE, BUT THAT IS KIND OF FUNNY. AT YOUR AGE, SHOULDN'T THAT BE A GOOD THING?
YOU GET THE CHANCE TO GO OUT ON THE HUNT AGAIN.
MEET NEW WOMEN, AND THE SUCH.
ON THE HUNT AGAIN? I'M NOT EXACTLY THE BEST AT IT. I'VE ONLY EVER TRIED TO GET A GIRL ONCE! I WOULDN'T EVEN KNOW WHERE TO START NOW.
BESIDES, LOOK AT ME, I'M NOT EXACTLY THE BEST CATCH. I'M KIND OF FAT, I HAVE NO GOOD CLOTHES. MY CAR IS AT LEAST A DECADE OLD. AND THE LIST GOES ON. SHE MIGHT HAVE BEEN A NUT, BUT AT LEAST LILA DIDN'T CARE ABOUT THOSE THINGS. A NEW WOMAN DEFINITELY WILL.
AT LEAST — I THINK SHE WILL...

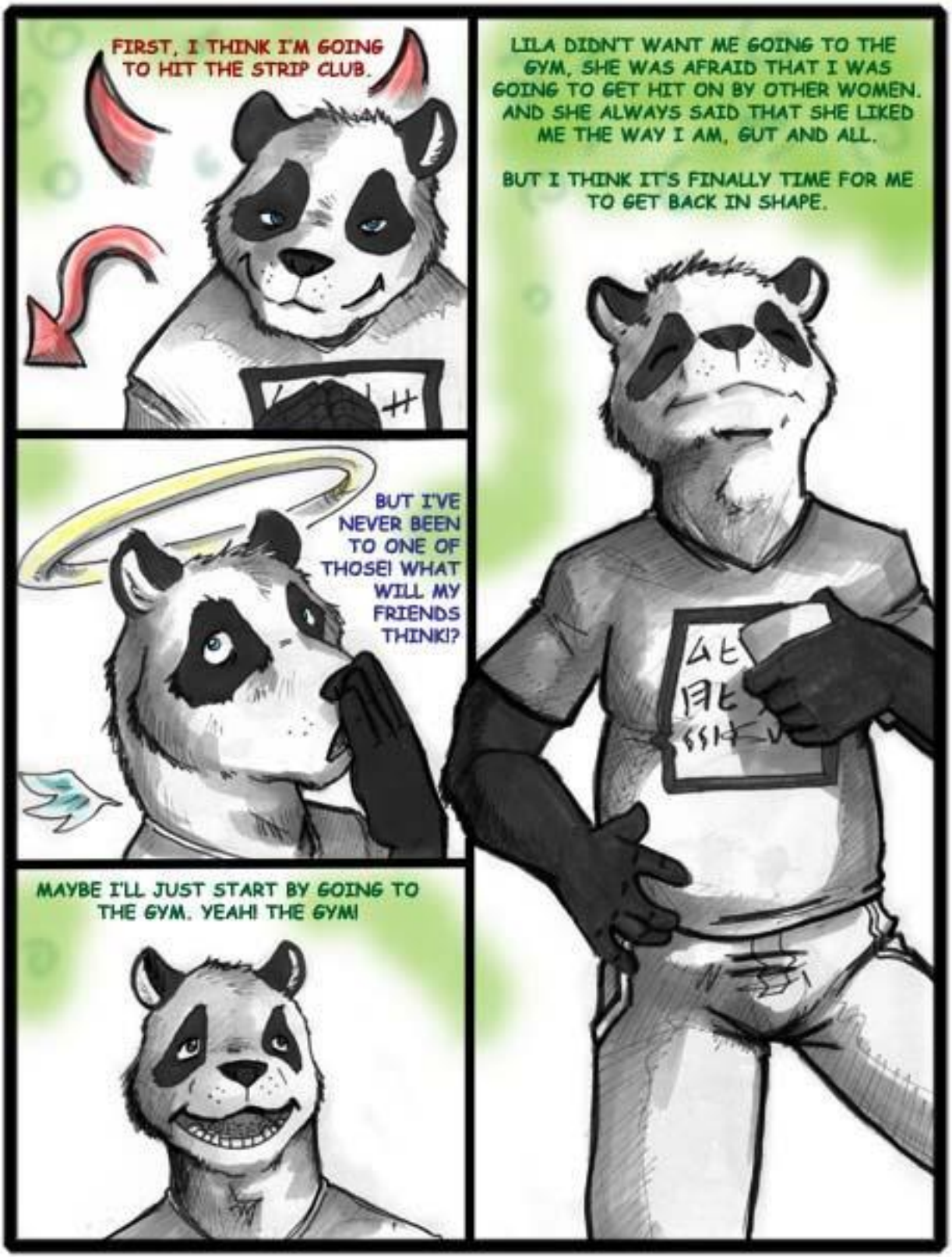
THAT DEFINITELY HAS A MISOGYNISTIC TONE TO IT. BUT SINCE YOU'RE BUZZED, I'LL LET IT SLIDE. ANYWAYS, WHAT I AM SAYING IS THAT IT IS TIME FOR YOU TO GO AND MEET NEW GIRLS. MAYBE GROW UP. EVEN LEARN MORE ABOUT WHO YOU ARE.
I AM DEFINITELY GETTING THE FEELING THAT YOU STAYED WITH THIS LILA BECAUSE YOU FELT SAFE, YOU FELT THAT YOU WERE DONE.
SHE WAS YOUR SAFETY, YOUR BACK-UP PLAN. IF EVERYTHING ELSE CHANGED SHE WOULD STILL BE THERE. AND THAT IS JUST LAZY.
YOU ARE RIGHT TO SOME DEGREE. SHE DID MAKE ME FEEL THAT I HAD ALREADY CONQUERED ONE OF THE BIGGEST HURDLES.
I HAD A MATE. SOMETHING THAT A LOT OF MY FRIENDS ALWAYS COMPLAINED ABOUT. I WAS THE LUCKY ONE WHO DIDN'T HAVE TO DEAL WITH THAT. AND NOW I AM IN THE SAME BOAT. AND IT SCARES ME, AND IT MAKES ME ANGRY AND IT MAKES ME DEPRESSED.
BUT DON'T YOU FIND THAT A LITTLE BIT THRILLING? THE IDEA OF GOING OUT THERE AND MEETING NEW AND EVEN MORE INTERESTING PEOPLE?

OLDER, YOUNGER, TALLER SHORTER, SKINNIER, WIDER, WITH SPOTS WITH STRIPES, WITH AN ACCENT.
FOREIGN, DOMESTIC, MY, MY...
THE LIST GOES ON AND ON AND ON. I REALIZE THAT THIS IS NOT AS EASY AS GOING OUT AND GETTING A NEW PAIR OF JEANS. BUT IT'S SIMILAR IN A WAY. YOU HAVE TO GET USED TO THE IDEA OF CHANGE. AND MOST PEOPLE DON'T LIKE CHANGE. ULTIMATELY THOUGH, THERE IS NOTHING THAT WE CAN DO ABOUT IT. THE WORLD WILL CONTINUE TO CHANGE AND WE CHANGE WITH IT.
IT USUALLY HAPPENS IN SMALL DOSES, UNTIL IT ALL BECOMES APPARENT. AFTER ALL, IT HAPPENED TO YOU AND LILA: YOU BOTH CHANGED IN TINY AMMOUNTS, THAT OVER TIME DRASTICALLY ALTERED WHO YOU ARE NOW, FROM WHO YOU USED TO BE WHEN YOU FIRST MET. THAT IS WHAT DROVE YOU APPART. AND IF YOU ASK ME, IT'S A GOOD SIGN, BECAUSE IN A TRUE RELATIONSHIP YOU BOTH WANT TO CHANGE IN THE SAME DIRECTION.
OR AT LEAST IN WAYS THAT WILL COMPLEMENT EACH OTHER. PHISICALLY MENTALLY, EMOTIONALLY, EVEN SEXUALLY.
I'M NOT YOUNG ENOUGH THAT I DON'T REALIZE THAT. I KNOW I HAVE TO MOVE ON. I KNOW THAT I NEED TO FIND A NEW MATE. I ALSO REALIZE THAT WE MIGHT NOT HAVE BEEN AS PERFECT A COUPLE AS I THOUGHT. I MEAN, I MISS HER, BUT LIKE I MENTIONED BEFORE, IT WASN'T A BAD BREAKUP. WE WERE ALREADY KIND OF DISTANT.
WHAT I REGRET THE MOST, ARE ALL THOSE LOST YEARS.
SIGH
OR MAYBE I'M JUST DRUNK AND HORNY.

HERE, TRY THIS. ON THE HOUSE. IT WON'T FIX YOUR PROBLEMS, BUT IT WON'T GIVE YOU MUCH OF A HANG-OVER.
AND WITH THAT BEING SAID, I AM ALSO GOING TO CUT YOU OFF FOR TODAY. I DOUBT THAT YOU NEED OR CAN HANDLE ANYTHING MORE THAN THIS LAST GLASS.
HMM... LOOKS WEIRD. WHAT IS IT?
ALL THAT YOU NEED AND NOTHING YOU WANT.
TRUST YOUR FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD BARTENDER. I'M CERTIFIED.

NOT BAD. THIS IS EITHER SOME REALLY DECEIVINLY GOOD STUFF, OR PLAIN SUGAR WATER.
YOU KNOW, MAYBE BEING SINGLE WON'T BE SUCH A BAD THING. IT'S JUST THAT I AM A CREATURE OF HABIT. I HATE CHANGE.
GETTING ADJUSTED TO THE NEW NORMAL WILL BE INTERESTING.
ABSOLUTELY. THIS IS A WHOLE NEW CHAPTER FOR YOU.
HEH, MAYBE IT WON'T ALL BE SO BAD.
CHANGE IS NOT ALWAYS BAD. RIGHT?

I MEAN, IT CAN BE, BUT NOT ALWAYS...
MY GOD... I'M REALIZING HOW MUCH OF A CHICKEN-SHIT I REALLY AM, AND I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHY!
I'M WASTING TIME SITTING HERE: FEELING SORRY ABOUT HAVING WASTED TIME.
I'M STARTING TO GET THAT FEELING IN THE PIT OF MY STOMACH THAT I GET WHEN I GO ON A ROLLER COASTER. A FUN MIXTURE OF FEAR AND EXCITEMENT THAT COMES WITHE THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE SUDDEN DROP AHEAD.
DID YOU KNOW THAT I'M IN MY MID TWENTIES AND I'VE ONLY EVER GOTTEN AS FAR AS SECOND BASE?
AND ONLY WITH ONE BOOB?
DON'T TELL MY FRIENDS THAT.
YOU KNOW WHAT!? I CAN FINALLY DYE MY HAIR! LILA WOULD NEVER HAVE ALLOWED ME TO!
THIS IS STARTING TO SOUND MORE AND MORE AWESOME THE MORE I THINK ABOUT IT!
YEEEEEEEAH! THIS IS GOING TO BE GREAT.


FIRST, I THINK I'M GOING TO HIT THE STRIP CLUB.
BUT I'VE NEVER BEEN TO ONE OF THOSE! WHAT WILL MY FRIENDS THINK!?
MAYBE I'LL JUST START BY GOING TO THE GYM. YEAH! THE GYM!
LILA DIDN'T WANT ME GOING TO THE GYM, SHE WAS AFRAID THAT I WAS GOING TO GET HIT ON BY OTHER WOMEN. AND SHE ALWAYS SAID THAT SHE LIKED ME THE WAY I AM, GUT AND ALL.
BUT I THINK IT'S FINALLY TIME FOR ME TO GET BACK IN SHAPE.

I DON'T THINK I WANT TO TAKE CREDIT FOR CREATING THIS MONSTER.
CALL ME NO FRANKENSTEIN.
NO, NO, I MERELY PROVIDED THE GENTLE PUSH NECESSARY FOR ANY WALL TO COLLAPSE AFTER MANY, MANY YEARS OF CONSTANT PRESSURE BEHIND IT.
I GUESS. I DON'T THINK THAT I WILL GO COMPLETELY WILD. BUT AT LEAST I WON'T BE AS RESTRAINED.
IT'S A GOOD START.
THANK YOU OLD MAN SENSEI.

"OLD MAN SENSEI"?
I THINK THAT I AM STUCK WITH THAT NAME.
OH WELL, IT COULD BE WORSE.
OK, I'M GOING TO HEAD OFF; IT'S TIME FOR ME TO SEE WHAT THE WORLD HAS TO OFFER.
I WANT TO SEE WHAT MY FRIENDS ARE UP TO, AND IF THE LOCAL GYM IS STILL OPEN.
SEE YA AROUND. THANKS FOR THE DRINK.
GOODBYE.